

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Mila Cosgrove
Director

Date: December 13, 2004

Thru: Lee Powelson
Classification Manager

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Subject: State Veterinarian Classification Study

Preamble:

The Department of Environmental Conservation requested a classification study of the State Veterinarian job class on October 30, 2002. The class was included in the Environmental Sciences Study begun August 13, 2003. During the course of the study the agency identified a need for a lower level veterinarian class to assist in managing the state's animal health programs. A position description for a new position assigned the lower level duties was submitted on October 22, 2004. Review of the position descriptions in the Environmental Sciences Study indicated the positions performing veterinary work were not appropriately grouped with other positions in the study. The positions have been removed from the Environmental Sciences Study and analyzed as a separate study.

History:

To provide a background for the evaluation of the classes under review the history of state job classes performing veterinary work was researched.

The State Veterinarian (P6465-21) and Assistant State Veterinarian (P6464-19) job classes were established on 02/14/1968. The classes covered two positions in the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture. The State Veterinarian was responsible for the state's animal health program, meat inspection program, reindeer program, dairy sanitation program, and marketing. The Assistant State Veterinarian's primary duty was coordinating the State-Federal Animal Health Program and assisting the State Veterinarian.

The classes were revised on 08/16/1972 and given new titles and salary ranges. The classes became Veterinarian I (P6464-21) and Veterinarian II (P6465-23). The scope and level of work described in the class specifications was not significantly changed.

On 09/01/1983 the Veterinarian I (P6464-21) was again revised. The class now defined a single position in the Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Seafood and Animal

Industries responsible for veterinary medicine and related aspects of the state's animal health and food processing industry. The class was retitled to Veterinarian (P6464-21). The exact date the Veterinarian II (P6465-23) job class was abolished is not available.

On 06/16/1989 the Veterinarian (P6464-21) job class was retitled State Veterinarian and the salary range changed to 23. The scope and level of duties and responsibilities covered by the job class did not change.

Scope:

This study covers the single position in the State Veterinarian job class, PCN 187236, and a new position for the proposed assistant level, PCN 187759.

Study Method:

Study of these positions was begun as part of the Environmental Sciences Study. In the information gathering stage, the State Veterinarian, Robert Gerlach, VMD, gave a presentation on the state's veterinary programs and his position's duties and responsibilities. Additional information on the need for and duties to be assigned to an assistant level position was gathered from Dr. Gerlach and Kristin Ryan, Division Director.

The veterinary positions were compared with other positions in the study to determine class grouping. Class specifications were drafted and provided to the division for review and comment. Following receipt of the agency's comments the drafts were finalized, the positions allocated, the appropriate salary ranges determined, and the decisions documented.

Class Analysis:

The Office of the State Veterinarian is a section in the Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Environmental Health. The section is responsible for veterinary programs that control animal diseases, ensure animal health, and prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans). The programs include regulating import and export of animals and animal parts; working with federal and other state health officers to monitor disease occurrence and evaluate transmission vectors; assisting veterinarians in identifying and treating animal diseases; and regulating dairy products and sanitation. Other projects or programs are given the veterinary section when they require specialized knowledge of veterinary medicine or a broad knowledge of animal health issues (such as the program for testing and monitoring the occurrence of environmental pollutants in fish).

Two positions in the veterinary section are included in this study. One is the section manager whose responsibilities include planning, organizing, directing and controlling resources and program delivery for the programs. The other is a new position being established to serve as a second in command for the section, supervising staff, assuming responsibility for delegated programs, and acting for the section manager when required. Both positions have substantial responsibility for representing the agency in contacts with federal, state, and local agencies, veterinarians, and the public; managing program operations, including budget, personnel, and other administrative areas; and advising agency executives on operational and administrative issues.

The state's classification plan provides for grouping positions into job classes when they are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that: the same title can be used to clearly identify each position; the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions; the same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions; and employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. Job classes should be constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

The specialized knowledge of veterinary medicine necessary to perform the work assigned the positions requires establishing very restrictive entrance requirements and severely limits potential layoff and recall. Because the state does not have other positions which require a similar level of knowledge of veterinary medicine these positions are properly dealt with separately for purposes of personnel administration. The differences in responsibility, authority, and supervision exercised and received indicates the two positions are not properly grouped into a single job class. Establishing separate job classes for the positions is appropriate.

A class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants. The class titles State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian are consistent with national titling practices and indicate the scope and level of duties and responsibilities that characterize the classes.

Class Codes are assigned to job classes based on their placement in the classification scheme. The duties and responsibilities of the positions under review indicate the classes are properly placed in the Agriculture job family of the Biological Sciences group. This family includes classes that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform work related to agricultural activities including crop and livestock production, inspection, management and development, and animal husbandry. Assigning class codes P6463 and P6464 is appropriate.

The minimum qualifications established for a job class must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and must not create an artificial barrier to employment of individuals in protected classes. Education requirements should be limited to the basic formal education that customarily prepares individuals for work in the field. Experience requirements are intended to ensure new employees can successfully perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. Required experience should be directly related to the actual duties of positions in the class and should not be equivalent to the work to be performed.

The customary preparation in the field of veterinary medicine is graduation from an accredited veterinary school. The practice of veterinary medicine requires licensure by the state in which an individual works. To receive a license an individual must provide evidence of completion of the required education and pass competency examinations. Establishing an entrance requirement of possession of a professional license in veterinary medicine will ensure applicants possess the requisite knowledge and are legally able to perform the required duties.

As the employees in these classes serve as professional consultants to veterinarians, the public, and other federal, state, and local agencies, requiring some previous experience in the field is appropriate. Requiring that the experience include the practice of veterinary medicine for large animals will ensure applicants have sufficient knowledge of livestock to perform successfully in the positions. A minimum of two years of experience should provide a sufficient indicator of a candidate's abilities.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has a national accreditation program for veterinarians. This is a voluntary program that certifies veterinary practitioners to work with federal and state animal health officials to ensure that exported animals will not introduce diseases into another state or country. Requiring that candidates have this national accreditation will ensure their familiarity with federal regulations and requirements for interstate transport. The USDA's statistics indicate over 80 percent of veterinarians in the country are accredited, which indicates requiring candidates have the accreditation prior to application will not excessively limit the available pool.

Internal Alignment:

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the state's pay plans, in accordance with merit principles, with the goal of providing fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintaining the principle of "like pay for like work." In evaluating internal consistency the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills, and other characteristics of a job are compared with job classes of a similar nature, kind, and level in the same job group and family or related job families.

In analyzing the internal alignment of these classes, comparisons were made to classes in the following job families in the Biological Sciences group: Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Research and Development; and Forestry and Natural Resource Management. The medical and public health characteristics of the classes were also compared to classes in the following job families in the Medical, Public Health, and Related group: Medical Professional; Special Health Services and Education; Laboratory and Technicians; and Health Administration.

The State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian exhibit characteristics common to positions established as section chiefs and their seconds-in-command. The lack of responsibility for all of the Division of Environmental Health's programs indicates the State Veterinarian is not equivalent to a Deputy Director. Comparing the nature of the veterinary program, number and variety of subordinate staff, statewide authority, national and international responsibilities, and type and level of impact on the general public and the state's agriculture reveals substantial similarities to other section chief, assistant chief, and program manager classes assigned ranges 22 and 20.

Previous internal alignment reviews of the State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian also found the classes similar to other classes at ranges 22 and 20, but determined that the medical public health nature of the classes warranted one range higher salary. This analyst examined the medical nature of the veterinary work; the role of the state positions in disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, eradication or control; and how the state positions' responsibility and authority relate to the roles and responsibilities of private practitioners, local

agencies, and federal agencies. Based on the medical and public health aspects of the classes, the additional range continues to be appropriate. Any further increase would result in substantial dissimilarities with other classes and no longer support like pay for like work.

Conclusions:

The duties and responsibilities of the position managing the state's veterinary programs and the position serving as the manager's second are appropriately placed in distinct classes. Using the class titles of State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian describes the scope and level of duties and responsibilities assigned the positions. State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian are appropriately placed in the Agriculture job family and assigned class codes P6464 and P6463. The classes are appropriately assigned salary ranges 23 and 21, respectively.

State Veterinarian, P6464-23, is revised effective December 16, 2004.

Assistant State Veterinarian, P6463-21, is re-established, as revised, effective December 16, 2004.

Position Analysis:

In the Office of the State Veterinarian, Division of Environmental Health, PCN 187236 is responsible for the planning direction and management of the state's veterinary animal health and animal industry programs. The position's duties and responsibilities distinguish the State Veterinarian job class. The position remains appropriately allocated to State Veterinarian and is updated effective December 16, 2004. The position remains in the Supervisory Unit. The position meets the Executive and Professional criteria for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act and is not eligible for overtime.

In the Office of the State Veterinarian, Division of Environmental Health, PCN 187759 is a new position established to assist in the management of the state's veterinary animal health and animal industry programs. the position's duties and responsibilities distinguish the Assistant State Veterinarian job class. The position is established in the Assistant State Veterinarian class effective December 16, 2004. The position is placed in the Supervisory Unit. The position meets the Professional criteria for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act and is not eligible for overtime.

Attachments:

Final class specifications
Allocation worksheet

cc: Kristin Ryan, Director
Division of Environmental Health
Department of Environmental Conservation

Mike Maher, Director

Division of Administrative Services
Department of Environmental Conservation

Joel Casto, Senior Management Consultant
Management Services – Resources

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Employee Records